

STATEMENT OF DANIEL N. WENK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 697, TO ESTABLISH THE STEEL INDUSTRY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE IN THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

SEPTEMBER 27, 2007

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 697 to establish the Steel Industry National Historic Site in the State of Pennsylvania.

The Department opposes enactment of this legislation.

S. 697 would establish a unit of the National Park System comprising resources related to the former United States Steel Homestead Works in the boroughs of Munhall, Rankin, and Swissvale, Pennsylvania. The resources include the site of the Battle of Homestead, which is important to labor history in the United States, the remnants of the Carrie Furnace, and the Hot Metal Bridge connecting mill sites in Rankin and Munhall.

The resources cited in the bill are representative of what was once a larger and historically important steel industry complex in the Pittsburgh region and the rise of the labor movement by steelworkers. The "Homestead Lockout," is one of the seminal events in American Labor history. We believe the resources are worthy of preservation and have significant interpretive value to the people of the United States and to those who may visit the site from other nations. They enable visitors to understand the role of steel manufacturing in our nation's history and the manner in which labor and management interacted before and during a most important time in the development of organized labor in the United States. This is the place that enriched men

such as Andrew Carnegie and J.P. Morgan, and in which immigrant workers and their descendents produced quality steel for U.S. and world markets.

The National Park Service (NPS) completed a Special Resource Study involving these sites in 2002. The study concluded that the sites were not feasible to administer as a unit of the National Park System; that the site of the “Homestead Lockout” lacked integrity; and, that there was no need for NPS management. The configuration and condition of the resources – scattered sites in varying states of repair, uncertainty regarding the protection of the resource setting over time (e.g. the area adjacent to the Homestead Landing Site is now a shopping center), and significant improvement and operational costs exposure - led to the conclusion that the site did not meet criteria for designation as a unit of the National Park System. The costs associated with stabilization and rehabilitation of the Carrie Furnace and the Homestead Site, alone, were estimated in the study to be in excess of \$14 million. With the addition of costs for exhibits and visitor services facilities, the total capital costs would rise to over \$36,600,000.

The study also concluded that a local management framework could adequately protect and manage these historic resources since they are all located within the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area. Rather than establishing a unit of the National Park System, the study recommended that these and additional historically important resources, including properties in the Homestead National Register Historic District and the Bost Building (a National Historic Landmark and the site of union headquarters during the strike), be designated as an affiliated area of the National Park System. An affiliated area designation would suggest a significantly reduced federal contribution for capital and associated operational costs, while increasing the

opportunities for a wider scale of resource protection measures and visitor experiences at nearby critically related resources. Local partners would contribute the larger share of costs for rehabilitation and interpretive facilities and services. The Bost Building, now owned and operated by the Steel Industry Heritage Corporation, the management entity for the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, would be the initial focal point of the affiliated area. We believe that an affiliated area status would permit a viable federal/local partnership for resource protection and enjoyment.

Establishment of a national historic site, as an affiliated area, would include a wider array of relevant resources than proposed in S. 697, without NPS ownership and management, but with technical and financial assistance, appears to be a better approach to protecting these resources for public education and enjoyment. This level of federal recognition and involvement could be a catalyst for greater local commitments and initiatives, and would serve to enhance public understanding, interest and appreciation of the roles of labor and management in the “Big Steel” era. We believe, based on the financial leveraging history of the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, that there is sufficient local capacity to contribute substantially to the preservation and interpretation of these resources.

Mr. Chairman that concludes my statement and I am prepared to answer any questions that members of the subcommittee may wish to ask.